

group (5), as a result of which the material laminate (1) exhibits bond-free areas (6) between the bonding sites (4) within each bonding group (5) which have a higher density than bond-free areas (7, 9) of the material laminate which are situated between the bonding groups (5), and wherein said absorbent product is elongated and has a width less than its length, the width of said second material layer (3) being less than the width of said absorptive body (12).--

REMARKS

The claims are amended herewith so as to sharpen their definition of the invention relative to the prior art.

Reconsideration is accordingly respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as unpatentable over MIZUTANI 5,613,960 in view of BUERGER et al. 5,652,041.

In the present invention, the width of the liquid-transferring layer 3 is less than the width of the absorptive body 12. This is advantageous, since it allows the saving of material. Moreover, the effect of the absorbent product is achieved where it is most required, which is to say, where the product is wetted. As a result, the desired effects described in the introduction of the present specification are accomplished.

This is in sharp contrast to the prior art. In MIZUTANI, the liquid-transferring layer has a width the same as that of the underlying liquid absorbent core. Similarly, this feature cannot be found in BUERGER et al. Accordingly, a

combination of MIZUTANI and BUERGER et al. cannot produce this feature.

Support for this feature is to be found on page 11 of our specification, lines 24-27.

Claim 14 has now been amended to recite this feature, thereby defining invention over the prior art.

Of course, the claims that depend from claim 14 are patentably vitalized by virtue of that dependency and so need not be further discussed at this time.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that this application has been placed in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 11, the paragraph beginning on line 24 has been amended as follows:

--While the liquid-transferring layer 3 is somewhat narrower than the absorptive body [11] 12 in the example shown, it extends over the whole length of the incontinence shield. Such a design is advantageous since it allows some saving of material. It is naturally possible to save further material by not allowing the liquid-transferring layer 3 to extend over the whole of the length of the incontinence shield. For example it is conceivable only to arrange the liquid-transferring layer 3 at the crotch part 17 of the incontinence shield since the majority of the body fluid which is to be absorbed by the incontinence shield can be expected to strike the shield within this part 17.-

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 14 has been amended as follows:

--14. (amended) An absorbent product including a liquid-permeable fibrous material outer layer (2), a liquid-impermeable outer layer (11), an absorptive body (12) enclosed between the two outer layers (2, 11), and a liquid-permeable liquid-transferring porous and resilient material layer (3) arranged between the liquid-permeable outer layer (2) and the absorptive body (12), at least one of the liquid-permeable outer layer (2) and the liquid-permeable liquid-transferring layer (3)

including thermoplastic material and the two material layers (2, 3) being mutually connected by bonding sites (4) within which the thermoplastic material has been caused to at least partially soften or melt and thereby bond together the two material layers (2, 3), wherein the bonding areas extend in the thickness direction of the material laminate (1) only in a direction through the first material layer (2) and then through at least a part of the second material layer (3), said bonding areas being arranged in two or more groups (5) with at least two bonding sites (4) in each group (5), with the greatest relative distance between two bonding sites (4), which are situated adjacent to each other, in a particular group (5) being less than the shortest distance between the group (5) and its closest adjacent group (5), as a result of which the material laminate (1) exhibits bond-free areas (6) between the bonding sites (4) within each bonding group (5) which have a higher density than bond-free areas (7, 9) of the material laminate which are situated between the bonding groups (5), and wherein said absorbent product is elongated and has a width less than its length, the width of said second material layer (3) being less than the width of said absorptive body (12).--